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KERAMOS

OLD HIZEN. I.



"And on the hill-sides I can see
The villages of Imari,
Whose thronged and flaming workshops lift
Their twisted columns of smoke on high."

As matter of prose, Imari is one small village on a plain at the head of a bay ten miles north of Arita, where are the mines and "thronged and flaming workshops." In a line running north-east to south-west lie the ten or more openings in Idzumi Yama, or Spring Mountain, from which the white compact amorphous stone is quarried out like marble. All varieties of "clay" are found here, furnishing material not only for body, but for the greenish or light yellowish glaze. The ashes used to mix with the glaze come from Satsuma, and a few of the pigments are imported from Europe and China.

Arita contains a population of 6400 souls, and consumes seven-tenths of the clay mined. Pottery is made in eighty houses, and twelve huge kilns or series of ovens are built up the hill-sides. Fine work is turned out from ten of the factories, in which thirty men on an average are employed. Seven other villages in the vicinity obtain their raw material from Arita, but in one only is very fine work made. The precious ware is packed with scrupulous care, and carried on the backs of men over the rough hilly roads to Imari, the seaport. Only the cheaper sorts are transported by bullocks or pack-horses. At Imari it is repacked, to be sent to Nagasaki, Tokio, or Europe. No porcelain is made at Karatsu, as was long believed.

The Arita stone, which is not, technically speaking, a "clay" at all, is pounded fine by water-power trip-hammers, washed in bamboo sieves, and thus wastefully, losing two-fifths of its original bulk, is beaten with clubs and stored preparatory to being tempered again for the wheel. Then, after throwing, moulding, and knife-scraping, it is set to dry before entering the furnace. On the Arita wheels egg-shell fancies the size of a thimble, vast trenchers that would cover a freight-car wheel, or vases six feet high, are deftly fashioned.

The fictile industry at Hizen was established by one Gorodaiyu Shonsui, during the reign of the 107th mikado. This man, of Isé province (where the Banko ware is made), had long desired to learn the secret of making real porcelain, which had hitherto never been attempted in Japan. The greatest official patron of Japanese art was the illustrious Taiko, to whom is due the marvellous development of the ceramic art in Japan in the seventeenth century. It is probable that Shonsui enjoyed Taiko's patronage, as Taiko's ambition was to rival China in art as well as in war. At any rate, Shonsui crossed the sea to China, and at Nanking, the famous seat of the porcelain industry, studied the art so long monopolized by China. Coming back to his own country, Shonsui did not settle in his native province, but in Hizen, under the patronage of the feudal house of Nabéshima. He began experimenting upon the clays of Idzumi Yama, in Arita. Under his hands a thriving industry sprang up, and a new art arose in Japan.

Yet, strange though it may seem, in the white rock of Idzumi Yama there is little that approaches the nature of true clay, and the special mineral kaolin is wanting. That material, which according to Chinese traditions of the divine craft, *must* enter into the formation of hard paste porcelain, being the very bones of the ceramic body, while petunse is its flesh, is not found in Arita earth. A thorough scientific examination of the mate-

rials of the Hizen potters, made by Prof. Henry Murtz, of the Columbia School of Mines, has established "the remarkable fact that in Hizen wares we have proof of a quality of porcelain unrivalled elsewhere in the world without the use of the special mineral kaolin which has been generally deemed indispensable as a component of porcelain paste."

Nabéshima, the daimio of Hizen, was one of the generals of Taiko's army who invaded Corea and crossed swords with the Ming hosts of China. At the close of the war in 1597, like his rival Shimadzu of Satsuma, he brought over several Corean families of potters, who possessed unusual and hereditary skill as porcelain-makers. Unlike their brethren who were prisoners in Satsuma, they intermixed by marriage among the Japanese and learned their language, so that the descendants of these Coreans who are still follow-

Japan," were imported into Europe. Unquestionably the largest collection of Old Hizen is at the Imperial Japanese Palace in Dresden.

While the proud princes of Satsuma sedulously kept the work of their potters from the merchants, especially from foreigners, Hizen put little or no restriction upon the sale of Arita ware to the Dutchmen at Nagasaki. This single loophole of the hermit nation was within the fief of the daimio of Hizen. Some of the superintendents at Deshima—the prison island in front of Nagasaki—notably old Wagenaar, were remarkable busybodies, and did their best to de-Orientalize the native art.

As to the characteristics of "Old Hizen," it is safe to say that in studying it we must not expect, as a rule, to feast our eyes on "high" or characteristic Japanese art. From this point of view, Hizen is far behind Satsuma, especially in respect to originality and departure from Corean and Chinese traditions. Yet in its influence on Europe, in historic importance, and as illustrating certain phases of decorative art, Old Hizen has a unique importance. It is the parent of the porcelain art and industry in Japan. Its fertilizing influence on Europe may be said almost to have created in Sèvres and Saxony a garden of ceramic blooms; while as models illustrating the soundest canons of decorative art, certain of its masterpieces stand matchless.

Pieces made under the direction of Shonsui are very rare, but they bear the characters forming his name. His palette of colors was very limited, and his work, it must be confessed, is interesting more from an historic than from an art point of view. Underglaze blue, red, green, and black in outline are his only colors; but gold, in flat bands, not mat, is liberally used. The red is of a totally different tint and hue from that of the later Eraku or Kaga, or even Satsuma. It has the effect of sealing-wax, and has, compared with the finest Kaga, a decidedly vulgar effect.

Some of the most desirable specimens of early Hizen are those of the figured blue ware called Sometsuké (dyed ware), in which the decoration is all under the glaze. In the "hawthorn pattern," so called, white plum blossoms appear on a light-blue background, though on some of the plates and bowls the tint is rather a blue-black. For softness and depth of tone, this old blue has not been excelled anywhere in the world—unless in China by the potters of the Ming dynasty. Yet, after all, in many of these old pieces there is the color only, rich indeed, but little else to admire; and one gladly turns to study the form, design, harmony, and decorative expression of later Hizen or Satsuma.

In summarizing my impression of early Hizen ware I should say that much of the old ware wins its fame from chronology and history rather than from art. The exception is a really artistic piece; the rule is an un-Japanese ideal. The first period of Old Hizen, say 1580-1610, is Chinese in the spirit of its decoration. Its elements are all from China; and the reason is clear—Chinese models were set before the workmen. The panels and medallions are often of Chinese scenery or of masses of peonies and chrysanthemums. Red, blue, green, and gold, with black in outlines, are the only colors. Some of the pieces are even marked with Chinese dates or legends; which are not "forgeries," as some suppose, but literal copies from models: just as a Chinese tailor will copy the patch on the sleeve of a model coat, or as a Japanese of to-day will reprint an English spelling-book and conscientiously add, "John Murray, London." The drawing is Chinese. Among a collection of Old Hizen, one feels in China, not in Japan, and the characteristic "Japanese touch" is not there. In a word, Old Hizen is a fair copy of the best Chinese. Nevertheless, already one sees how much whiter is the Hizen paste than the Chinese, and the vigor of the colors and general strength of the artists' composition give promise of splendid progress. In one line of work the old Hizen is inimitable, namely, in plates of under-glaze blue, and in jars of the hawthorn pattern. Many of the blue pieces are rich and bold in decoration.

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS.



EIGHT-SIDED OLD JAPANESE VASE. IN THE LATE SAN DONATO COLLECTION.

ing the ancestral craft at Arita are to all appearances Japanese. These men made the porcelain industries so productive, that their master, the daimio, was soon enriched. A market for the ware was opened at Nagasaki, and early in the seventeenth century the Dutch began to ship hundreds of crates to Europe, where the admiration of it led to the discovery of kaolin beds, and the foundation of potteries under royal patronage. When the fever of "China craze" and "Japonism" convulsed Europe in the middle of the seventeenth century as it now does in the nineteenth, the dozen of Dutchmen at Deshima not only bought Hizen's products fresh from the kiln, but began the systematic hunting up and purchase of the old wares made by Shonsui, and the first generation of original Corean captives. In one year, 1664, it is said that over sixty-one thousand pieces of Japanese porcelain, mostly "Old

THE INVENTOR OF HARD PORCELAIN.

CONCLUSION.

THE discovery of kaolin, in Böttgcher's hands, led to great results, and proved of far greater importance than the discovery of the philosopher's stone would have been. In October, 1707, he presented his first piece of porcelain to the Elector, who was greatly pleased with it; and it was resolved that Böttgcher should be furnished with the means necessary for perfecting his invention. Having obtained a skilled workman from Delft, he began to *turn* porcelain with great success. He now entirely abandoned alchemy for pottery, and inscribed over the door of his workshop this distich:

"Es machte Gott, der grosse Schöpfer,
Aus einem Goldmacher einen Töpfer." *

Böttgcher, however, was still under strict surveillance, for fear lest he should communicate his secret to others or escape the Elector's control. The new workshops and furnaces which were erected for him were guarded by troops night and day, and six superior officers were made responsible for the personal security of the potter.

Böttgcher's further experiments with his new furnaces proving very successful, and the porcelain which he manufactured being found to fetch large prices, it was next determined to establish a Royal Manufactory of porcelain. The manufacture of delftware was known to have greatly enriched Holland. Why should not the manufacture of porcelain equally enrich the Elector? Accordingly a decree went forth, dated the 23d of January, 1710, for the establishment of "a large manufactory of porcelain" at the Albrechtsburg in Meissen. In this decree, which was translated into Latin, French, and Dutch, and distributed by the Ambassadors of the Elector at all the European Courts, Frederick Augustus set forth that to promote the welfare of Saxony, which had suffered much through the Swedish invasion, he had "directed his attention to the subterranean treasures (*unterirdischen Schätze*)" of the country, and having employed some able persons in the investigation, they had succeeded in manufacturing "a sort of red vessels (*eine Art rother Gefässe*) far superior to the Indian terra sigillata;" † as also "colored ware and plates (*buntes Geschirr und Tafeln*) which may be cut, ground, and polished, and are quite equal to Indian vessels," and, finally, that "specimens of white porcelain (*Proben von weissem Porzellan*)" had already been obtained, and it was hoped that this quality too would soon be manufactured in considerable quantities. The royal decree concluded by inviting "foreign artists and handicraftsmen" to come to Saxony and engage as assistants in the new factory, at high wages, and under the patronage of the King. This royal edict probably gives the best account of the actual state of Böttgcher's invention at the time.

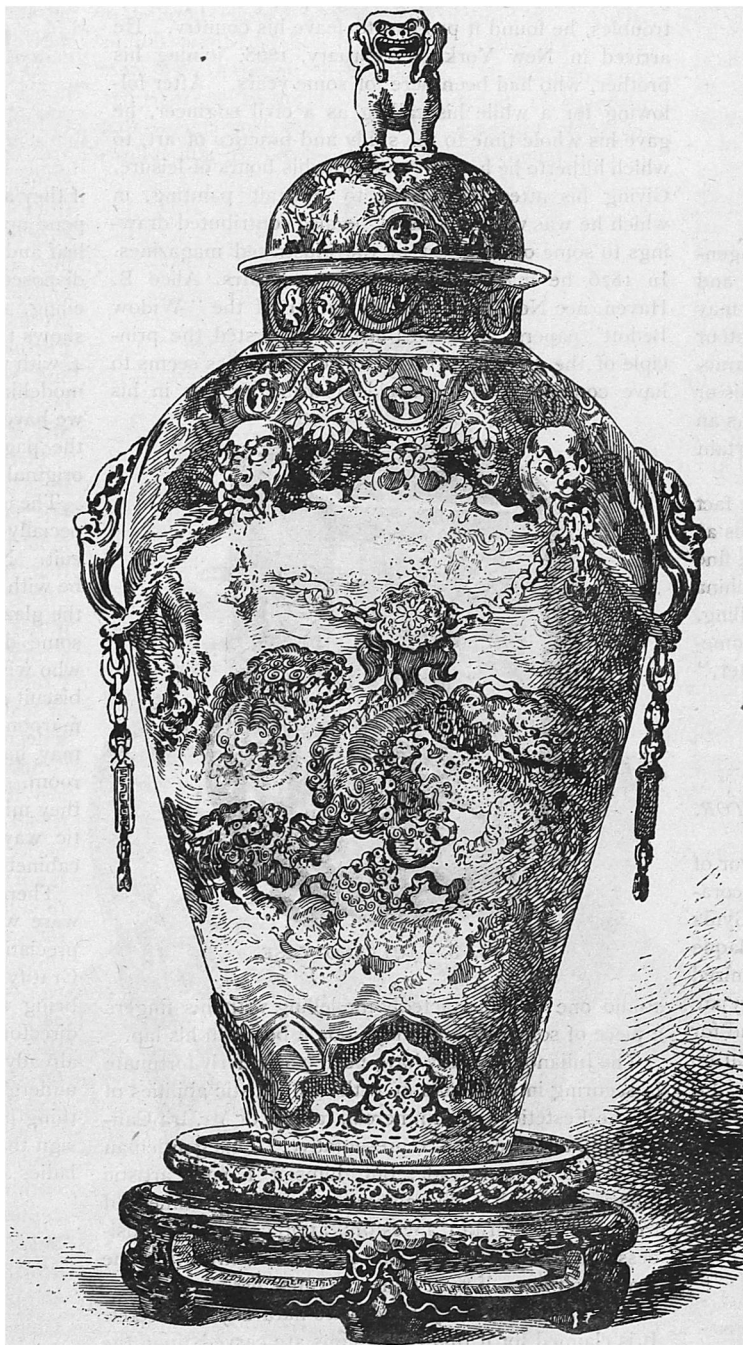
It has been stated in German publications that Böttgcher, for the great services rendered by him to the Elector and to Saxony, was made Manager of the Royal Porcelain Works, and further promoted to the dignity of Baron. Doubtless he deserved these honors; but his treatment was of an altogether different character, for it was shabby, cruel, and inhuman. Two royal officials, named Matthieu and Nehmitz, were put over his head as directors of the factory, while he himself only held the position of foreman of potters; and at the same time was detained the King's prisoner. During the erection of the factory at Meissen, while his assistance was still indispensable, he was conducted by soldiers to and from Dresden; and even after the works

were finished, he was locked up nightly in his room. All this preyed upon his mind, and in repeated letters to the King he sought to obtain mitigation of his fate. Some of these letters are very touching. "I will devote my whole soul to the art of making porcelain," he writes on one occasion; "I will do more than any inventor ever did before; only give me liberty, liberty!"

To these appeals the King turned a deaf ear. He was ready to spend money and grant favors, but liberty he would not give. He regarded Böttgcher as his slave. In this position the persecuted man kept on working for some time, till, at the end of a year or two, he grew negligent. Disgusted with the world and with himself, he took to drinking. Such is the force of example that it no sooner became known that Böttgcher had betaken himself to this vice than the greater number of the workmen at the Meissen factory became drunkards too. Quarrels and fightings without end

ment, Böttgcher lingered on for a few years more, until death freed him from his sufferings, on March 13th, 1719, in the thirty-fifth year of his age. He was buried *at night*—as if he had been a dog—in the Johannis Cemetery of Meissen. Such was the treatment, and such the unhappy end, of one of Saxony's greatest benefactors.

The porcelain manufacture immediately opened up an important source of public revenue, and it became so productive to the Elector of Saxony that his example was shortly after followed by most European monarchs. Although soft porcelain had been made at St. Cloud fourteen years before Böttgcher's discovery, the superiority of the hard porcelain soon became generally recognized. Its manufacture was begun at Sèvres in 1770, and it has since almost entirely superseded the softer material. This is now one of the most thriving branches of French industry, of which the high quality of the articles produced is certainly indisputable.



HIZEN VASE. MANUFACTURE OF KO-RAN-SHA, AT ARITA.

were the consequence, so that the troops were frequently called upon to interfere and keep peace among the "Porzellanern," as they were nicknamed. After a while the whole of them, more than three hundred, were shut up in the Albrechtsburg, and treated as prisoners of state.

Böttgcher at last fell seriously ill, and in May, 1713, his dissolution was hourly expected. The King, alarmed at losing so valuable a slave, now gave him permission to take carriage exercise under a guard; and having somewhat recovered, he was allowed occasionally to go to Dresden. In a letter written by the King in April, 1714, Böttgcher was promised his full liberty; but the offer came too late. Broken in body and mind; alternately working and drinking, though with occasional gleams of nobler intention, and suffering under constant ill-health, the result of his enforced confine-

HINTS TO CHINA COLLECTORS.

IN acquiring a collection it is necessary to have some standard of excellence, under which no specimen should be purchased, whatever the bargain, unless in very exceptional cases; as, for instance, a particularly rare mark, when perhaps the quality or decoration of the specimen does not warrant its purchase, but its low price will allow of an ultimate "weeding" should a better specimen be secured. Except in such cases as these, it is one of the greatest mistakes that a young collector can make to buy second and third-rate pieces because they are cheap. In the same way, but also subject to similar exceptions, imperfect and restored specimens should be avoided.

However small the collection, let it be good and perfect as far as it goes, and by the prudent expenditure of a sum that can be spared each year, not only will an interesting collection be the result, but a fairly profitable investment, in a pecuniary sense, will be made.

A dealer's stock, say of \$50,000 value, will consist of specimens good, bad, and indifferent, to meet the requirements of his varied customers—the buyer who is fond of show and effect, the one with a passion for bargains, and the careful collector. Now if the latter were from time to time to pick out the best specimens, and keep them in his cabinets, adding again and again, with taste and judgment, until he had secured the same amount in value (money spent) as the dealer—say, for instance, the hypothetical \$50,000—his collection would, if brought to the hammer, be one much more valuable, because comparatively perfect of its kind; and as the dealer would have parted with his best pieces as he bought them, while the collector would have held them, waiting until worthy companions offered themselves, it must be seen at a glance how the judicious amateur can afford the dealer's profit and still have many advantages.

To buy successfully, then, in an æsthetic as in a commercial sense also, a specimen should be examined as to its quality of "paste," brilliancy of color, special characteristics as a specimen of its factory—decoration, the drawing of the figures if a subject, the natural effect of flowers or fruit, or the "distance" and softness of a landscape, and "tone" and solidity of the gilding—in fact, looked at and judged much as any other article that one is accustomed to buy upon its merit would be examined; and then, if the result of this examination be satisfactory, the question of price is the next important consideration, and this, of course, is a matter that must be left to be arranged between buyer and seller, only with the caution that the price should not tempt the acquisition of a specimen not desirable for its merit.

To write a list of rules and regulations to be observed in making selections, with a view to detect fraud, and

* "Almighty God, the great Creator,
Has changed a goldmaker to a potter."

† The whole of the Chinese and Japanese porcelain was formerly known as Indian porcelain—probably because it was first brought by the Portuguese from India to Europe, after the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco da Gama.

secure only the genuine specimens, is simply impossible, and an attempt to do so would confuse and mislead. An amount of taste and feeling enters into the whole business, and unless the amateur has these, he will hardly acquire judgment.

The interest, however, that we take in any favorite pursuit brings us in contact with kindred spirits, and it

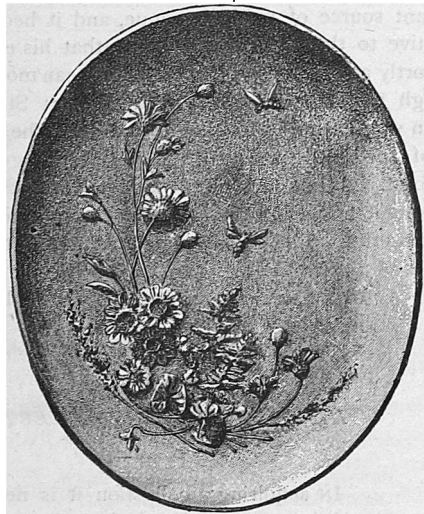


FIG. 1.—JULIANO PLAQUE.

is by the conversation on artistic subjects thus engendered, and the opportunities of seeing collections and making comparisons, that a sound judgment may be acquired; and by intuition, as it were, the amateur will soon be well acquainted with the different characteristics of each factory; he will be able to name this or that specimen without reference to the mark, just as an artist can recognize the touch and style of a certain master in a painting, without seeing the signature.

One word here as to judgment of *quality*. The fact is that taste is not nearly so technical in ceramics as is rather generally supposed. What is true of a fine picture, a bronze or a cabinet, is also true of a china figure, a vase, a cup and saucer. Spirited modelling, telling color, high finish, and that indescribable something that may be termed in a word "character," should be the points that make the merit apparent,

THE JULIANO WARE AND ITS INVENTOR.

THE introduction of the Juliano ware to the favor of amateurs in china painting and to the trade for decorative purposes has been remarkably rapid. Mr. Gyula de Festetics, the inventor, modelled his first plaque in August, 1879, and the company was only organized in January, 1880; yet the resources of the factory are already taxed to the utmost to supply the demand for the ware. From this it is not to be supposed that no difficulties attended the inception of the enterprise; for there were many. It is true that Mr. de Festetics, while pursuing his experiments in ceramics, did not, like Luca della Robbia, have to put his feet in a basket of shavings to prevent them from freezing with the cold.

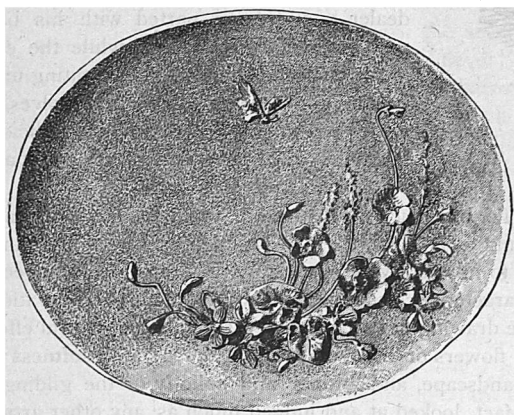


FIG. 4.—JULIANO PLAQUE.

He did not have, like Bernard Palissy, to resort to the extremity of burning up his wife's furniture in order to supply fuel for his furnace. Nor did the government here find it necessary to keep him locked up under a strong guard, as the Government of Prussia did Boettger, "the gold cook," for fear some other country might benefit by his discoveries. Like all inventors, Mr.

de Festetics has had many difficulties to encounter before bringing his work to its present degree of excellence; but impecuniosity cannot be counted among these, and we have not heard that he has been persecuted to any great extent.

Born in Tynau, Hungary, in 1847, after early instruction in a Roman Catholic seminary, he became a student at the Military Academy at Heinburg, where he remained until 1864, and then entered the Austrian army as cadet officer. From his early boyhood he had shown great taste in drawing and painting, but his aristocratic family would have been shocked at the idea of his adopting as a profession the career of an artist. While stationed in Italy, however, he had many opportunities to pursue his studies in art, and he was quick to avail himself of them. In 1866, at the outbreak of the war, young Festetics joined his regiment, and served gallantly through the campaign. He was wounded in the breast at the engagement of Condino, which put an ending to his fighting. In 1867-68, like many of his hot-blooded countrymen, getting involved in political troubles, he found it prudent to leave his country. He arrived in New York in February, 1868, joining his brother, who had been here for some years. After following for a while his calling as a civil engineer, he gave his whole time to the study and practice of art, to which hitherto he had devoted only his hours of leisure. Giving his attention chiefly to portrait painting, in which he was very successful, he also contributed drawings to some of the best of the illustrated magazines. In 1876 he married the daughter of Mrs. Alice B. Haven, née Neal, the talented author of the "Widow Bedott" papers. The idea which suggested the principle of the Juliano ware to Mr. de Festetics seems to have come to him by accident while he was in his

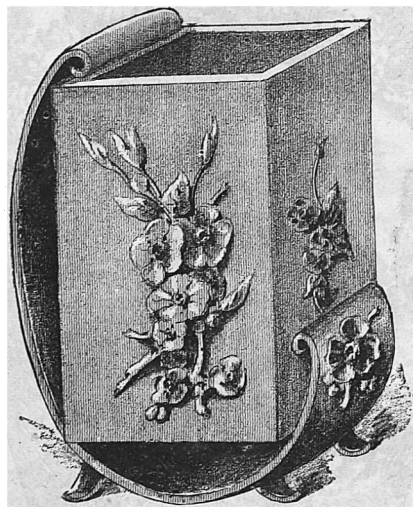


FIG. 3.—JULIANO VASE.

studio one day abstractedly modelling with his fingers a piece of soft clay which lay upon a board in his lap.

The Juliano Company have been particularly fortunate in securing in combination with the artistic abilities of Mr. de Festetics the commercial talents of Mr. Ira Canfield Jr., their business representative. This gentleman had retired from trade, but, himself having artistic tastes, and, with a characteristic shrewdness inherited from his old Puritan ancestors, appreciating the business advantages of Mr. de Festetics's invention, he associated himself with him in his new enterprise.

The process of the Juliano ware naturally is a secret. It is claimed for it that the designs are carved upon the flat surface of the solid clay instead of being attached as in ordinary high relief decoration of the kind. This is easy to believe after examining the decorated ware in the biscuit. There is a clean undercut to the ornament, which latter suggests no marks of joining. The nearest semblance perhaps to the Juliano undercut relief is to be found in the "snow-ball" ware; but each piece of ornament in that ware is picked up and applied separately. Moreover, there is a degree of boldness and spirit in the relief decoration of the Juliano plaques which is not to be found in ordinary high relief decoration wherein the ornament is separately moulded and merely superimposed.

From among a large variety of pieces on exhibition at the headquarters of the company at Chambers Street, New York, we have selected a few for illustration. The general character of the designs, it will be noticed, evidences decided originality. Fig. 1 shows on an oval plaque a graceful tangle of field daisies with violets, fern leaves and partridge berries, about which

two bumblebees, apparently sated with the sweets they have extracted, are buzzing their satisfaction in a very natural manner. The composition is as charming as it is simple, and there is no part of the delicate modelling which will not bear close examination. It is indeed as if the flowers and the insects had been suddenly frozen with all their natural beauty intact. The robins and apple-blossoms in Fig. 2 are a more difficult subject;

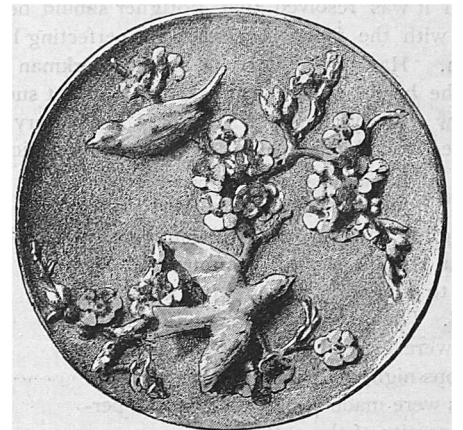


FIG. 2.—JULIANO PLAQUE.

if they are painted, much of the ultimate effect will depend upon the skill of the decorator. The water-lily leaf and the half-opened buds are cleverly and naturally disposed. Breadth and boldness characterize the modelling, which, simple as is the design, unmistakably shows the touch of the master. The oval plaque, Fig. 4, with violets and wild roses, evinces no less delicacy in modelling and charm in sentiment than the upright oval we have already noticed. The vase in the middle of the page is one of several of equally ingenious and original design.

The specimens of the ware that we have seen, especially the plaques, are, we think, most beautiful in biscuit. Naturally they are not so strong as they would be with the delicately modelled decoration fortified by the glaze; and in this state they would probably gather some dust if unprotected. We should advise those who wish to preserve the beauty of the plaque in the biscuit stage to frame the piece under glass, in a mat of maroon, olive-green, or such other dark-hued velvet as may harmonize with the general appearance of the room. The plaques might thus be hung as pictures, or they might be inserted in furniture panels in many artistic ways which will suggest themselves to the clever cabinet-maker.

There is one field in which the merits of the Juliano ware will certainly find immediate acceptance and appreciation. We mean among the china decorators. Gratifying results in decoration we understand are being attained at the company's works by a former director of the famous Copeland Works. Amateurs already are busy trying their skill upon the biscuit for underglaze painting. For most of them there is something peculiarly enjoyable in having only to color a design that already has form and substance; and these ladies and gentlemen we are sure will rise up and call

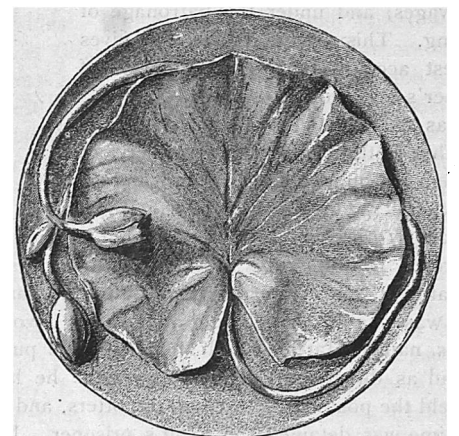


FIG. 5.—JULIANO PLAQUE.

Mr. de Festetics blessed for making their road in this direction so pleasant and comparatively easy. Those who do not wish to risk the dire possibilities of a firing may tint the biscuit in water-colors, although we do not recommend them to do so; for whatever decoration is applied to earthenware should be as permanent and enduring as the ware itself.